

BIAS CRIMES AND BIAS-RELATED ACTS

A. Definitions

1. A bias crime means any criminal offense where the person or persons committing the offense acted with a purpose to intimidate an individual or group of individuals because of race; color; religion; gender; disability; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; national origin; or ethnicity.
2. A bias-related act means an act directed at a person, group of persons, private property, or public property that is motivated in whole or in part by racial; gender; disability; religion; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; national origin; or ethnic prejudice. A bias-related act need not involve conduct that constitutes a criminal offense.
3. All bias crimes are also bias-related acts, but not all bias-related acts will constitute a bias crime.

B. Procedure For Reporting Bias Crimes and Bias-Related Acts

1. A school employee shall immediately notify the principal and the superintendent or designee when in the course of their employment, they develop reason to believe that:
 - a. A bias crime or a bias-related act has been committed or is about to be committed on school grounds;
 - b. A bias crime or a bias-related act has been or is about to be committed by a student on or off school grounds, and whether such offense was or is to be committed during operating school hours; or
 - c. A student enrolled in the school has been or is about to become the victim of a bias crime or bias-related act on or off school grounds, or during operating school hours.
2. The superintendent or designee shall promptly notify the local police department and the bias investigation officer for the county prosecutor's office when a bias crime or bias-related act has been committed or is about to be committed on school grounds, or has been or is about to be committed by a student on or off school grounds, and whether such offense was or is to be committed during operating school hours, or a student enrolled in the school has been or is about to become the victim of a bias crime or bias-related act on or off school grounds, or during operating school hours.
3. The superintendent or designee shall immediately notify the local police department and the bias investigation officer for the county prosecutor's office where there is reason to believe a bias crime or bias-related act that involves an act of violence has been or is about to be physically committed against a student, or there is otherwise reason to believe a life has been or will be threatened.

C. Nature of Referral

The mandatory referral for suspected or committed bias crimes and bias-related acts as described in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-6.3(e) and this Regulation is only a request to the law enforcement agencies to conduct an investigation and is nothing more than the transmittal of information which may be pertinent to any such law enforcement investigation.

D. Concurrent Jurisdiction

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1. Unless the local police department or the county prosecutor's office request otherwise, school officials may continue to investigate a suspected bias crime or bias-related act occurring on school grounds and may take such actions as necessary and appropriate to redress and remediate any such acts.
2. School officials will immediately discontinue any ongoing school investigation if the local police department or the county prosecutor's office believe the school investigation could jeopardize an on-going law enforcement investigation or otherwise endanger the public safety.
 - a. Upon notice provided in D.2. above, school officials will take no further action without providing notice to and receiving the assent of the local police department or the county prosecutor's office.

E. Preservation of Evidence

1. School officials will secure and preserve any such graffiti or other evidence of a suspected bias crime or bias-related act pending the arrival of the local police department or the county prosecutor's office.
2. The school officials, when feasible, will cover or conceal such evidence until the arrival of the local police department or county prosecutor's office in a manner designed to minimize the harm and continued exposure to students by such evidence.

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